Bridwell Library

Bridwell Library at the Perkins School of Theology of Southern Methodist University is a leading research library with extensive collections in religious and cultural studies, and one of the finest rare book collections in the United States.

Bridwell Library's special collections contain printed books and manuscripts dating from the twelfth to the twentieth century. The collections are diverse, but particular strengths lie in the fields of theology, church history, scripture, philosophy, history, graphic arts, and literature. Many of these editions are distinguished by fine illustration and typography, notable provenances, and historically significant bindings. Holdings also include manuscripts and archival material documenting eighteenth-century religious and social life in England and America and the fine press movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Collections of note at Bridwell Library include:

- The largest collection of incunabula in the Southwest. These books "from the cradle" of printing (i.e., books printed with movable metal type before 1501) include significant early editions of the Bible, as well as first editions of important theological and devotional works, and the Greek and Roman classics.
- Thousands of sixteenth-century imprints, with particular strength in the areas of Reformation studies, early illustrated books, and the history of printing and typography.
- Textually and historically significant editions of the Bible, documenting the history of biblical scholarship, the dissemination of the Bible, and the art inspired by the Bible from the age of Gutenberg to Chagall's Bible. Bridwell's holdings have been recently enhanced by the gift of the Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Bible Collection.
- Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century imprints on English church history, liturgy, hymnology, religious polemic, and philosophy, as well as groundbreaking encyclopedic and scientific works.

- The works of St. Augustine (354-430) with special emphasis on incunabular editions of *The City of God* (Bridwell has seventeen pre-1501 editions); works by and about the fifteenth-century Italian reformer, Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498), many in first or early editions; and an important collection of first editions of Martin Luther's (1483-1546) sermons and treatises.
- Hundreds of fifteenth- to twentieth-century editions of the devotional genres known as the *Dance of Death* and the *Art of Dying*.
- The Arthur Corey Collection of Christian Science material, including original documents from the classes of Mary Baker Eddy, as well as the writings of critics of the movement such as Mark Twain.
- A fine collection of the works of English theologian and scientist Joseph Priestley (1733-1804).
- First and early editions of most of the works of John Wesley (1703-91), the founder of Methodism, and of his colleagues and critics. Manuscript holdings also include extensive correspondence to and from Wesley and other Methodist leaders.
- Large collections of typographically distinguished editions by such masters as Giambattista Bodoni (1740-1813), Eric Gill (1882-1940), and Bruce Rogers (1870-1957).
- A collection of Victorian publishers' bindings, many of which are "signed" by their designers.

- The papers of the Egyptologist Georg Steindorff (1861-1951).
- The modern private press movement, with extensive holdings of the first British private presses, established in the late nineteenth century: Kelmscott, Ashendene (complete holdings of all imprints), Eragny, Vale, Essex House, and Doves, as well as twentieth-century British, American, and Continental private presses.
- The archival records and papers of Charles H. St John Hornby (1867-1946), founder of the Ashendene Press.
- Important examples of twentieth-century *livres d'artiste* designed and executed by such artists as Picasso, Rouault, Matisse, Chagall, Leger, Dali, Johns, and Schmied. Many of these books are in bindings designed by such masters as Crett, Legrain, and Bonet.

Bridwell Library is named for Joseph S. Bridwell, a Wichita Falls (Texas) businessman, who devoted much of his time and resources to building this library. Special support has always come from the Bridwell family and the foundation that Mr. Bridwell established upon his death. The Bridwell Foundation has continued in the tradition of J.S. Bridwell, generously supporting library acquisitions and programs.

Through an extensive exhibition and publication program, the library interprets its holdings and explores important cultural and historical issues. A recent exhibition catalog, *The Reformation of the Bible / The Bible of the Reformation,* was featured by the History Book Club and awarded the American

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Library Association's Leab Prize. Bridwell Library also sponsors lectures, conferences, and other special events in its role as a center for intellectual life. A visiting scholars program provides stipends for researchers to work intensively with Bridwell's collections.

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Dr. Valerie Hotchkiss,
Director, Bridwell Library